

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE POSS DUPE

PAGE 01 LONDON 12349 231923Z

63

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01 EB-11 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /115 W

----- 115882

R 231646Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4146

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LONDON 12349

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK

SUBJECT: LABOR PARTY: UNHAPPINESS ON THE RIGHT

SUMMARY - LORD CHALFONT, A FORMER LABOR MINISTER, HAS DESERTED THE LABOR PARTY IN PROTEST AGAINST ITS DRIFT LEFTWARDS AND ITS DOMINATION BY THE TRADE UNIONS. EDDIE GRIFFITHS, A RIGHT-WING LABOR MP, HAS BEEN SACKED BY HIS PARTY AND REPLACED BY A MILITANT LEFTIST. BOTH DEVELOPMENTS CONFIRM AND REINFORCE THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE LEFT IN THE LABOR PARTY. THEY DO NOT, HOWEVER, PRESAGE, AS CHALFONT AND OTHERS HOPE, THE SPLITTING OF THE LABOR PARTY AND THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.
END SUMMARY

1. LORD CHALFONT, MINISTER FOR DISARMAMENT IN THE LAST WILSON GOVERNMENT, 1964-70, LAST NIGHT ANNOUNCED HIS
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 LONDON 12349 231923Z

RESIGNATION FROM THE LABOR PARTY. IN A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER HE ATTRIBUTED HIS MOVE TO THE GROWING IN-

FLUENCE IN THE PARTY OF THE LEFT AND THE VIRTUAL DOMINANCE OF THE LARGE TRADE UNIONS OVER A WIDE AREA OF POLICY- MAKING. AS SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF CURRENT POLICIES WHICH HE COULD NOT SUPPORT, HE CITED THE PARTY'S ATTITUDE TO EC MEMBERSHIP, ITS APPROACH TO DEFENSE EXPENDITURES, AND ITS INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES. FINALLY, AND PERPHAS MOST TELLINGLY, HE EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT LABOR'S ELECTION MANIFESTO SHOULD HAVE DECLARED SUCH INFLEXIBLE OPPOSITION TO ANY COOPERATION WITH ANYONE OUTSIDE LABOR'S OWN RANKS.

2. IN AN ARTICLE IN TODAY'S TIMES EXPLAINING HIS RESIGNATION, CHALFONT VOICES DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE USE OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES, THE RISE OF EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY POLITICAL FORCES, AND THE IMPACT OF INFLATION ON PEOPLE'S FAITH IN THEIR POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. DESPAIRING OF THE CONSERVATIVES, HE PROCLAIMS HIS OWN FAITH IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY. HE SEES LITTLE PROSPECT OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' REGAINING CONTROL OF THE LABOR PARTY ANY TIME SOON, LOOKS HOPEFULLY TO AN EVENTUAL REALIGNMENT OF BRITISH POLITICS -- POSSIBLY WHEN A FUTURE LABOR GOVERNMENT TRIES TO TAKE BRITAIN OUT OF THE EC -- AND ARGUES THAT IN THE MEANTIME THE LIBERAL PARTY SEEMS TO BE THE NATURAL CENTER OF GRAVITY OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.

3. CHALFONT HAS AGREED TO CAMPAIGN ON BEHALF OF CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW, ANOTHER FORMER LABOR MINISTER, WHO DEFECTED TO THE LIBERALS LAST MAY. HE WILL ALSO CAMPAIGN FOR DICK TAVERNE, THE FORMER LABOR MP WHO RESISTED HIS PARTY'S ATTEMPT TO SACK HIM IN 1973 AND WON RE-ELECTION AS AN INDEPENDENT.

4. MEANWHILE, EDDIE GRIFFITHS, ANOTHER RIGHT-WING LABOR MP SACKED BY HIS PARTY JUST LAST MONTH, ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT HE TOO WOULD STAND AS AN INDEPENDENT. THE NEW OFFICIAL LABOR CANDIDATE IN HIS DISTRICT IS JOAN MAYNARD, ARGUABLY THE MOST MILITANT LEFT-WINGER ON THE PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. (AT THE PARTY'S 1973 NATIONAL CONFERENCE, SHE CRITICIZED MICHAEL FOOT FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 LONDON 12349 231923Z

BEING TOO MODERATE ON THE EC ISSUE.)

5. COMMENT: CHAFONT'S RESIGNATION, TIMED AS IT WAS FOR THE EVE OF THE OFFICIAL START OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, MUST BE AN EMBARRASSMENT FOR WILSON, BUT IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH IMPACT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CAMPAIGN ITSELF. ALTHOUGH NEVER FORMALLY A LIBERAL, CHALFONT WAS AN ADVISOR TO THE LIBERAL PARTY ON DEFENSE MATTERS AT THE TIME (1964) WHEN WILSON MADE HIM A LIFE PEER AND APPOINTED HIM MINISTER FOR DISARMAMENT. AFTER LABOR WAS DE-

FEATED IN 1970, CHALFONT CEASED TO BE VERY ACTIVE POLITICALLY. HE RESIGNED FROM THE OPPOSITION FRONT BENCH IN THE LORDS IN 1972 OVER THE PARTY'S CHANGE OF POLICY ON EC MEMBERSHIP. AS THE PARTY HAS SHIFTED PROGRESSIVELY LEFTWARDS, HE HAS MADE NO SECRET OF HIS GROWING DISENCHANTMENT.

6. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SEE IN CHALFONT'S AND MAYHEW'S RESIGNATIONS, AND TAVERNE'S AND GRIFFITHS' EXPULSIONS, AUGURIES FOR A MAJOR REALIGNMENT OF BRITISH POLITICS -- FOR THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY EMBRACING LIBERALS, PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES, AND RIGHT-WING LABORITES. THOSE WHO ENTERTAIN SUCH A VISION LOOK TO ROY JENKINS TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP. THE IMPLICATION, IN FACT, OF CHALFONT'S ARTICLE IN THE TIMES IS THAT WHEN A FUTURE LABOR GOVERNMENT TRIES TO TAKE BRITAIN OUT OF THE EC, ONLY THEN WILL JENKINS AND THE OTHER PRO-EC SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN THE PARTY FINALLY BE FORCED TO MAKE A BREAK.

7. WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT THIS SCENARIO. TAVERNE, BELIEVING THERE WAS A GREAT POPULAR DEMAND FOR A NEW SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, TOOK THE PLUNGE AT THE LAST GENERAL ELECTION AND FIELDED FIVE CANDIDATES. THE RESULTS WERE DISASTROUS. THE NEW PARTY POLLED ONLY A HANDFUL OF VOTES AND TAVERNE BARELY MANAGED TO HANG ONTO HIS OWN SEAT.

8. CHALFONT IS AN ABLE, THOUGHTFUL, AND ARTICULATE JOURNALIST TURNED MINISTER, BUT HE WIELDS NO POLITICAL CLOUT. MAYHEW AND GRIFFITHS STOOD AT THE FAR RIGHT OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 04 LONDON 12349 231923Z

THEIR PARTY. IF MAYHEW IS RETURNED TO PARLIAMENT ON OCTOBER 10, IT WILL BE AT THE EXPENSE OF A CONSERVATIVE, NOT LABOR (HE WILL BE STANDING FOR A DIFFERENT SEAT FROM THE ONE HE HELD FOR LABOR), AND GRIFFITHS IS GIVEN LITTLE CHANCE OF DEFEATING MISS MAYNARD.

9. CHALFONT MAY BE RIGHT WHEN HE SAYS THAT A SHOWDOWN ON THE EC WILL FINALLY SPLIT THE LABOR PARTY, BUT BY THEN, WE FEAR, IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE. THE INFLUENCE AND AUTHORITY OF THE JENKINSITES HAVE BEEN STEADILY ERODED OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. BY NEXT YEAR, THEIR RESIGNATIONS FROM THE LABOR PARTY (BY NO MEANS INEVITABLE), WOULD IN ANY CASE BE MORE LIKELY TO CONFIRM THEIR DEFEAT AND POLITICAL ISOLATION THAN PRECIPITATE A MAJOR REALIGNMENT OF BRITISH POLITICS.
ANNENBERG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR RELATIONS, MEMBERSHIP, POLITICAL PARTIES, ELECTION CANDIDATES, LABOR UNIONS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON12349
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740267-0792
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740923/aaaaatax.tel
Line Count: 167
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <03 JUL 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LABOR PARTY: UNHAPPINESS ON THE RIGHT SUMMARY - LORD CHALFONT, A FORMER LABOR MINISTER, HAS
TAGS: PINT, UK, EEC, SDP, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, (CHALFONT, LORD), (GRIFFITHS, EDDIE), (MAYNARD, JOAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005